

A
DISCOURSE
BY
M. L'ABBE FAUCHET,
ON THE
LIBERTY of FRANCE.

Delivered Wednesday the 5th of August, 1789, in the Parish Church of St. Jaques, and of the S. S. Innocens, at a solemn Service sacred to the Memory of those Citizens who fell at the taking of the Bastille, in the Defence of their Country.

Vos enim ad Libertatem vocati estis Fratres.

For Brethren we have been called to Liberty.

Gal. v. ver. 13.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY WILLIAM HARVEST,
MASTER OF AN ACADEMY AT KENSINGTON.

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by W. CHALKLEN, No. 49, GRACE-CHURCH-STREET; Sold also by G. BURNETT, STRAND; J. MARTIN, KENSINGTON; and J. LUCAS, KNIGHTBRIDGE.

1790.

1600/516.



DISCOURSE, &c.

THOSE generous citizens who have offered up their lives, for the defence of this metropolis, the preservation of their brothers, and the liberty of France, shall live for ever in our hearts, and will be revered to the latest posterity.

Let us, to celebrate their memory, mingle with the solemn dirge, our songs of praise.

What a desirable death is that, which has given life to a whole empire!

The cannon thundering from the top of the ramparts of despotism on the head of innocence, hath awakened public liberty.

Patriotism hath fired with a divine ardour the souls of the citizens.

The treachery of the supporters of tyranny has redoubled the impetuosity of the courage of our brave defenders. Their dying hands have grasped the laurels of victory. These patriot heroes are fallen; but they have left France standing; amazed at being free. A day, an hour was sufficient for the destruction of that colossus of arbitrary power, which for ten ages, pressed down one of the first nations in the universe.—Eternal justice! you had delayed your vengeance; but the time appointed in your immutable decrees, even the time when the oppressors of the state were to have compleated the measure of their iniquity; was that of liberty to the French. Hell could not have conceived a project more dreadful than that of our tyrants; nor heaven have ordained a victory more glorious than that of our deliverers. The workers of iniquity who devoured the country as a defenceless prey, vanish at the instant fixed by them

for



for slaughter.—The citizens ready to be devoured lift their heads amidst the shades of death, strike with one blow the aristocracy, strengthened by a reign of a thousand years, by two hundred thousand mercenaries armed for destruction ; and the aristocracy is no more ; and the country breathes again ; and from the Pyrenees to the Scheldt, from the Alps to the ocean, France is free ; and twenty millions of Frenchmen are brothers, citizens, men under a monarch who will always be good, and under laws which must necessarily be just. Ah ! our calling is at last fulfilled ; glory be to God ; we are called to liberty my brothers.

Vos enim ad libertatem vocati estis fratres.

The liberty of France is founded on justice : this important truth, which we are going to unfold, suffices to immortalize our brothers who were slain for it.— Such is the tribute of homage, the honor-

able citizens reunited in the centre of this great metropolis, dedicate by a voice, to which, perhaps, patriotism may lend the accents of eloquence, to the eternal memory of those heroes without ancestry, who have sealed the liberties of their country *with their blood.*

Brethren, our call to liberty, is ordained by nature, by religion and by the schemes of providence. This liberty is therefore acquired in conformity to every principle of justice; and its founders are entitled to every homage.—Nature! how hast thou been abused by despotism! How that monster, the scourge of humanity had transformed mankind into a herd of slaves! It tyrannised over the minds and hearts; it forbade thinking and commanded love; it took the advantage of its horrid success; it feigned to hear the public voice, when beings stupified by slavery, and perishing with hunger, said “Yes, you are our w—“ thy masters, we have no cause to com—
“ plain

" plain ; yes, you make us happy ; we
 " love you." Thus the two powers, the
 understanding and feeling, which form
 the very essence of man, were under the
 sceptre of tyrants ; human nature was
 shackled from its constituent principles,
 even to the inmost recesses of the heart,
 Are there any yet? Is there one of those
 vile flatterers of men in power, who dares
 still to insult nature, and belie the rights
 of mankind? The wretches! they ap-
 plauded that sad and mournful tranquility
 which was maintained from one extremity
 to the other of a vast empire, under the
 reign of terror.—To the ears of kings, they
 transformed into infallible truths, false-
 hoods dictated by fear. True, peace reigned
 every where, but it was the peace of
 slavery, which is the death of nature. It
 must be proclaimed, and that aloud, and
 even in the temples; it is philosophy which
 hath brought nature to life again: it is she
 who hath created again the human mind,

and given again life to society. Humanity was dead through bondage ; it is brought to life by reflection ; she has looked into herself, and there found liberty ; she has sent forth the sound of truth throughout the universe. The tyrants have trembled : it was their will to have riveted again the fetters of the people ; they would have assassinated one half of mankind, to continue to crush the remainder. But nature is invincible : the moment she recovers life, she is omnipotent.

Without doubt there should be kings in great nations, but kings freely instituted to execute the laws. Laws are necessary for every people, but laws, freely assented to by the public will. Liberty is not anarchy ; it is order. Man is an intelligent being : let him think. He is a sensible being ; let him have a will. He is a sociable being ; let him associate his thoughts with the thoughts of his brothers ; his pleasures with

with the will of his fellow citizens ; from the result will arise real laws, a true government, a sovereign powerful to do good, civic brotherhood, national unity, liberty : such is the nature of man ; such are his rights.

All those who concur in rendering a people free, are then the benefactors of nature. Philosophers, you have reasoned ; we return you thanks. Representatives of the country ; you have raised our courage ; we bless you. Citizens of Paris, my generous brothers, you have erected the standard of liberty : glory be to you. * Wise chief, † worthy hero, both of whom we have freely chosen to preside over the order and defence of the community, in this capital of the empire ; be ye happy with our love : and you intrepid victims, who have devoted yourselves for the good of your country ; ah ! receive, receive in

* Monsieur Baillie.

† Marquis de la Fayette.

heaven,

heaven, with our tears of gratitude the joy of your victory.

Yes, Christians, it is not only the justice of nature ; it is that of religion which we ought to acknowledge in the revolution which makes us free : it is by the principles of the Gospel that we may look on our deliverers as martyrs for the public good.

What evils have the false interpreters of the divine oracles done the world, when they have attempted in the name of heaven to make the people cringe to the arbitrary will of governors ! They have consecrated despotism, they have made heaven the accomplice of tyrants. This is the greatest of crimes. What saith the Scripture, “ The kings of the gentiles bear “ rule : brethren it shall not be so with “ you.” You must appear before kings and rulers ; they will command you to do wickedly, but you shall resist them even to death.

The

The false teachers of despotism exult, because it is written : “ Render to Cæsar “ that which is Cæsar’s,” but what does not belong to Cæsar, must we render that to him also? Now liberty is not Cæsar’s ; it belongs to human nature. The right of oppression belongs not to Cæsar ; but the right of defence belongs to all men. Tributes belong only to the prince, when the people consent to them. Kings have no right in society, but what the laws grant them ; and nothing belongs to them but by the will of the Public, which is the voice of God. Christ died for the human race, by dying for his country. He was sacrificed as the enemy to Cæsar : this was a false pretence in the deicides ; but it was, in the Son of God, a great lesson both for the Cæsars and for the people. He opposed himself to the aristocracies of his nation ; meditate on this important truth, my brothers. He continually devoted to public indignation, the tyrants of the people,

ple, the unjust exactors of taxes, the despots of thought, and all the oppressors. The unworthy aristocratics, deceived the multitude who fawned on their pride; they insinuated into the vacant minds of their slaves that madness which animated them against the Saviour of mankind; in a word, O my brothers, I should die contentedly after having declared this single sentence: **IT IS THE ARISTOCRACY WHO CRUCIFIED THE SON OF GOD.**

How! mankind have no right to resist injustice! They ought not to defend their brethren against the fury of tyrants! and to adore our oppressors, must we suffer ourselves to be deprived of the first of our blessings, the liberty of conscience more valuable than existence itself, since without it life is only a punishment. Ah! men will no longer hear those sacrilegious impostors, who ascribe to heaven what heaven forbids by all her laws, and by herself. God is the fountain of justice,
and

and authorizes no iniquity on earth. “ Honor the king” without doubt ; but is there a nation who honors him more than the French ? “ Obey those who command you :” yes, but let it be those who command what they ought ; if their orders are unjust, resist, and resist even to dying for the liberties of the country. This is the gospel my brothers, every other religion is an impiety.

We have then followed the true principles of Christianity, by offering our lives to save our brothers, by seizing again the rights of nature, so long violated ; by repelling the tyrants ready to glut themselves with slaughter ; by destroying that terrible den within which despotism devoured her victims ; while from its lofty towers, it continually threatened us with all its thunders : those who died in that immortal action, are then the true martyrs of their country ; for, it is written also in the Scripture, “ No one hath a greater love

“ love than he who lays down his life for his brothers :” the multitude of sins that may have before happened through human infirmity, is covered by this divine love : *nemo majorem caritatem habet.*

Let us extend our thoughts further, and let us see the justice of providence in the sudden establishment of the liberties of France. Providence how adorable art thou ! When her times arrive, how dreadful are her judgments for the enormous crimes of tyranny, and how gracious to a good people long time oppressed. How righteous is she in all ways ! we shall not follow the gradual unfoldings of her plans in the government of France. The time of our liberty suffices for our admiration, and for our love.

The aristocracy in a long possession of perverting the sovereign’s name to exercise its despotism, had heaped every horror on our heads. The national assembly was

to have been annihilated; the capital wasted by sword and fire; every province drenched in blood; and the aristocratics were to have founded a perpetual dominion on the entire ruin of the creditors of the state, and on the wreck of the whole empire. The best of kings was ignorant of these execrable projects. In the mean time, under the pretence of appeasing some commotions which these great villains themselves had excited in the capital, armies dragging with them every engine of destruction, surrounded us. The supplies of corn brought at a great expence from abroad, and attentively secured by that sublime man*, that first character in the world, whom providence and our love had replaced in the centre of the administration, were diverted to the use of bloodthirsty troops; and famine threatened with the worst of evils, this

* Monsieur Necker.

great

great city. First of all it was necessary to drive away this great minister who was as another providence to the kingdom; they drive him out by night; they thrust him, the sword suspended over his head, beyond our limits. Our looks, until then uncertain, discover, at that instant, all those horrors with which we are threatened. But heaven has prevented all. It permitted there should exist a centre of reunion in the capital. The citizens, electors of the representatives of the country, had assemblies formed—They repaired to them in crowds—They named fourteen to administer in this decisive moment the public affairs. Thanks to my brothers they honour my patriotism; I am one of the first amongst those whom they judge capable of devoting himself to liberty: O heaven! I bless you; I have not deceived their hopes. My life was nothing to me; I would have sacrificed it a thousand times for the country. Every quarter of this

this great city unite themselves as one man. The national guard of Paris is formed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the sacred bells in *ictu oculi in novissima tuba*.

In the mean time the fortress thunders against the people. We are informed of this criminal violence in the palace of the commons. The balls yet burning are presented to our view. My soul is inflamed with ardent courage: I propose to my colleagues, animated with equal ardor, the decree which ordered the commander to put, without spilling the blood of the citizens, that murderous place, under the guard of the city. They yield me the glory to be the messenger of this decree, with the ancient president of our assemblies and two other of our generous brothers. We fly through the dangers; we disperse, by our prayers, the people driven to desperation, who attempted, in vain, to strike at the top of the battlements, the cowardly

assassins who were showering down death. Then we raised up the pacific decree. A civilian, a priest, clothed in all the garments of peace, ought to have been heard, even for the interest of the murderers of the country. They answer us with all the engines of war. Three times we return with an intrepidity always new. Oh! with what joy should we have died to have saved the lives of our fellow citizens. Three times they answer our peaceful summons with thundering tubes. Our lives remain, as by a miracle of providence. A second deputation, with a signal still more intelligible, if it is possible, with a flag inclined, succeeds not better. We then pronounce the supreme decree. Go, ye intrepid warriors, invincible French guards, worthy so great a name which you have already proved by ranging yourselves on the side of your country against her oppressors: go, ye brave champions of the Fauxbourg S. Antoine, national

national troops hardly formed, and already sure of triumph. Go, ye generous volunteers of every district and of every class, heroes by birth, from the first hour ripe for victory. We speak, and it is done. The outwork of the fort is seized; the governor's recess is in our power; from within the place he speaks of surrendering himself: good citizens! even in the fury of success, you suspend your courage; an attentive multitude crowd themselves into the ditches and seize the courts; and then, O height of perfidy! Treason for ever execrable! the whole fortress thunders; every brazen mouth pours forth the murderous lead upon your heads. The sacred fury of an avenging Deity fire the souls of our warriors! Enormous chains threatening bridges, frightful gates fall ye under their terrible and redoubled strokes---It is taken---It is ours.---The conquering citizens enter in crowds, into the frightful dungeons of

despotism; they hang out on those high towers from whence tyranny bore rule, the standard of liberty. The traitors are no more. The country can scarce conceive her happiness: she is as terrified with her success. Men thought that time was necessary for this great conquest. Time! if it had been needful my brothers, we should have perished without redemption; it was the time marked by the enemies of the state to have destroyed the country. Providence! Providence! we adore you in our extasies! you fought for us; you revenged in a minute, the crimes of twenty reigns, and you prevented an immense crime, which, at that same instant, was to have surpassed them all.

Those armies prepared for slaughter; they vanish, they fly on every side. Our good king discovers the atrocious projects of the aristocratics who were deceiving his love. He hastens unattended into the midst of the representatives of the nation; he announces

to them that he has discarded that impious gang, who concealed his people from him and betrayed his power. He approves all they have done for the safety of the state. This news which crowns our wishes, is brought by the national assembly itself into the bosom of the capital: every heart overflows with joy. The king himself, this king so beloved, so worthy to be so, appears soon after, without any guard but his love and ours, among his children, armed for the country. He passes, admiring that awful ardor, the majestic appearance of an hundred thousand soldiers created in one day, and as fallen from the heavens to honour the triumphant entry of the sovereign of a free people. Acclamations which seemed to resound from every part of the empire, and united into one voice every voice of France, compose the concert of liberty. I have done.

O noble brothers! virtuous fellow citizens! immortal friends! we will deserve

our

our happiness: we will not dishonour the most astonishing, the most happy victory which has ever been gained since the foundation of the world. The terrible struggles which could alone affect it, will subside by wisdom, and nothing will remain but the strength of order and the happiness of unity. Frenchman! generous Frenchman! the laws only, the sacred laws, which will express the public will, shall henceforth direct the vengeance of the country and the justice of the nation. Martyrs of France! it is your only wish in your heavenly abodes: your brothers whom you have left free on earth, shall fulfil them. Ah! manners are going to be formed: religion, restored to her native purity is going to re-assume over every ennobled soul, her lawful empire; we shall be, at the same time, it is our destiny in the schemes of providence, the freest and the mildest, the most courageous and the most amiable of every people. France
will

will be the model of nations, and the establisher of true liberty in the universe.

Heaven preserve, nature and all her good sentiments!—The country and all her good citizens!—The state and her good king, to whom we will ever be faithful!—The government and her good minister, who is restored for ever to our vows!—The laws and their good institutions, in the assembly of the nation.—The commons of Paris and their good Chief, who has the genius of liberty, as the genius of science!—The national guards and all the good soldiers of the country!—The hero, the deliverer of America, who proved himself to be the deliverer of France!—The religion of brothers!—uncorrupted manners!—The French! Heaven preserve liberty!

Glory be to God who hath made us free. Amen.

F I N I S.



